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SUBJECT: March 25 MFA Press Briefing: Selected Journalists To Lhasa, Dialogue With Dalai Lama, Taiwan's New Leader, Olympic Torch Relay, China-ROK FTA, Iran and SCO, Nansha Island, Visits

1. Key points at the March 25 MFA Press Briefing:

-- Selected foreign journalists will participate in a reporting trip to Lhasa.

-- China is open to dialogue with the Dalai Lama as long as he gives up separatist activities.

-- China will continue to follow the One China policy to further develop relations with Taiwan.

-- Free trade agreement between China and ROK should "proceed with strategic perspective."

-- China welcomes Iran's initiative to deepen the cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

-- China has indisputable sovereignty over Nansha Island.

Selected Foreign Journalists Going To Tibet

2. At the March 25 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesperson Qin Gang said the MFA will release a list of 10 foreign news agencies allowed to participate in a reporting trip to Lhasa. Journalists will be able to interview the victims and visit the sites damaged by the protesters, Qin added.

3. At the height of the situation in Tibet, foreign journalists were kept out of affected areas for their own safety and to safeguard local stability. Local authorities have the right to take special measures according to Chinese laws and regulations. China hopes all obey and cooperate with the special measures in effect.

4. Asked about the actual number of casualties, Qin said the number for Lhasa has been released, but incidents from Aba are still under investigation. Qin confirmed the March 24 clash between armed police and Tibetan protesters in Gansu Province, which killed one police officer and injured a few others. Local police are currently investigating this matter, Qin added.

China Open To Dialogue With The Dalai Lama

5. Asked about the international community's efforts to encourage China to start a dialogue with the Dalai Lama, Qin said the door for dialogue is always open as long as the Dalai Lama gives up separatist activities. "The Chinese Government has already requested the Dalai Lama give up separatist propositions and cease separatist activities," Qin added. With regard to the Dalai Lama's connection with Uighur activists, Qin said further investigation is needed in this matter.

6. According to Qin, 110 countries have expressed their support for the Chinese Government and oppose criminal acts and violence organized by the "Dalai clique." Asked whether countries that have open dialogue with Dalai Lama will be "punished by China," Qin hopes

that other countries can recognize the true nature of Dalai Lama.

Taiwan's New Leader

¶17. "China will continue to follow the One China policy to further develop relations with Taiwan," Qin said regarding China's position on Taiwan's newly elected leader Ma Ying-jeou. "The Mainland and Taiwan belong to one China," Qin added.

Disruption of Olympic Torch Ceremony In Greece

¶18. Asked about the disruption during the Olympic torch ceremony in Greece, Qin said such acts of disturbance are shameful and in violation of the Olympic spirit. China has the competence and capability to carry out a smooth torch relay and successful Olympic Games. The torch relay in Tibet will go on as scheduled, Qin said.

With regard to the European Council's discussion of boycotting the Olympic Games, Qin said China opposes any country or individual politicizing the Olympic Games.

China-ROK: Possible Free Trade Agreement

¶19. With regard to a possible free trade agreement between China and ROK, Qin said the two sides should "proceed with strategic perspective." Currently, academic institutions are conducting in-depth studies on this matter and hope to provide practical suggestions, Qin added. Regarding a possible meeting between leaders of China, Japan and Korea, specific arrangements are being discussed through diplomatic channels.

BEIJING 00001123 002 OF 002

Iran And Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

¶10. Iran has applied for full membership status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China welcomes Iran's initiative to deepen the cooperation and will make a decision through consultations, Qin added.

China Has Sovereignty Over Nansha Island

¶11. Regarding recent reports of Philippine President Arroyo's plan to visit Nansha Island, Qin said China has indisputable sovereignty over Nansha Island. China and the Philippines will address this issue through consultations, Qin added.

Visits

¶12. Malawi President Bingu Mutharika will meet with President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao this week. Premier Wen will visit Laos March 29-31. Vice President/Prime Minister/Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum will visit China March 31 - April 3.

PICCUTA